(a) whether the number of incidents of prisoners escaping from jails in the different States in the country including Madhya Pradesh, has gone up;

(b) if so, what is the number of such incidents and number of prisoners who have escaped from jails since 1998 till date, State-wise; and

(c) what steps have been taken by the Central and State Governments for prevention of such incidents and action taken against the guilty persons?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) to (c) "Prisons' being a State subject, specific information about the number of prisoners escaping from jails is not maintained by the Central Government. Prision management, including the prevention of escape of prisoners from jails, is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments. However, the Central Government, on its part, has been extending financial support to the State Governments or strengthening their prison security, etc.

Illegal Weapons Traders in Chambal

†633. SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is correct that Chambal region of Madhya Pradesh is becoming the centre of illegal weapons traders;

(b) whether it is also correct that threat being posed to dacoits elimination from rough and rugged terrains of Chambal due to smuggling of illegal weapons; and

(c) if so, what measures have been taken to prevent the operation of serious criminal activities like accumulation of illegal weapons and smuggling alongwith the number of cases which have been registered against these gangs during the last year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

Freedom Fighters Pension

634. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) the number of pending freedom fighter pension cases from Pondicherry;

(b) what steps are being taken for speedy clearance of the cases; and

(c) whether it is a fact that even after the orders have been passed by the High Court of Madras to give pension, the same has not been granted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CH. VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) and (b) No case complete in all respects and eligible for Samman pension, duly verified and recommended by the Government of Pondicherry, is pending.

(c) Orders passed by the Courts are complied with unless there are good grounds for filing appeals there against.

Blast in Srinagar

635. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there was a devastating blast in the vegetable market at Srinagar on 3rd January, 2000;

(b) if so, the details of the blast and the number of casualties in the blast;

(c) whether Government have found any security lapse in the case; and;

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CH. VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) and (b) On 3rd January, 2000 around 1000 hours militants caused an explosion at Sabzi Mandi, Batmaloo, Srinagar when a large number of people were purchasing vegetables at the Sabzi Mandi. Due to the explosion 15 persons including some security personnel died.

(c) No Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Terrorist Infiltration from Nepal

636. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state: